

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Advice on how to travel safely

Please follow these steps for your own safety and the safety of others

- Stay at home if you or anyone in your household is experiencing coronavirus symptoms (new continuous dry cough, fever or the loss of or a change in your sense of smell or taste) or if you are self-isolating or you are shielding
- Only travel if your journey is essential, for example, for work or shopping.
- Consider walking or cycling, if you can, to reduce pressure on the road network and on public transport where capacity will be limited
- Plan your journey and leave additional time due to temporary restrictions or changes to previous timetables or schedules
- Pay for your journey online, use smart ticketing, the operator's mobile app, or contactless payment, if you can, to reduce cash handling
- Comply with any signage or instructions on public transport or from transport staff as the safety measures in place are for everyone's benefit
- When travelling by bus, tram or rail you should, and are expected to, wear a face covering
- Keep yourself and others safe by maintaining the 2 metre physical distance rule
- Where impossible to maintain 2 metre distancing, avoid physical contact and face away from others, keep the time you spend within 2 metres of others as short as possible
- Be considerate of the impact of restrictions on the needs of fellow passengers who may have impairments, disabilities or mobility issues
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water or use a hand sanitiser before and after every transport journey.

Thank you for your patience and understanding during these difficult times.

Introduction

This guidance contains advice on how to be safe when walking, wheeling (wheeling refers to travelling by wheelchair), cycling, or travelling in private vehicles or on public transport during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Scotland.

This guidance comes into effect immediately on 26 May 2020 and will be reviewed regularly and, if necessary, updated on this website.

The Scottish Government has set out a route map which provides the framework for decision making in taking Scotland through and out of the crisis. It gives an indication of the order in which the government will carefully and gradually seek to change current restrictions. You should therefore review this guidance regularly to see how the changes to restrictions will affect your travel.

If you are travelling elsewhere in the UK you should familiarise yourself with the transport guidance of the UK Government or the devolved governments of Wales and Northern Ireland.

Keep yourself and others safe by following this advice

Before you make any travel plans you should consider the following two questions:

1. Should I travel?

You should stay at home if you:

- are experiencing any coronavirus symptoms
- are self-isolating as a result of coronavirus symptoms or sharing a household with somebody with symptoms
- or are shielding.

Read more information.

2. Is my journey necessary?

Before you travel, you should consider if your journey is necessary. This will ensure the transport network can keep running and allows people who need to make essential journeys to travel.

Some examples of necessary travel are:

- to get to and from work, if you cannot work from home
- to get food or medical supplies
- to support someone who is vulnerable, if no-one else can do so
- to attend critical childcare or learning provision, if the child of a key worker (guidance on who is a key worker), or accompany a child attending critical childcare or learning provision
- where you need to for other reasons, in line with rules on staying at home.

If the answers to both the questions above are **Yes** then we ask you consider what form of transport you will use for your journey.

In order to reduce pressure on the road network and the public transport system we would like you to consider **walking, wheeling or cycling** for all or part of your journey, if you can.

Walking, wheeling and cycling

If you decide to walk or cycle information from your local authority or Sustrans (the national charity for walking and cycling) can help you plan your journey, including maps showing dedicated paths and routes. If cycling, you should check any changes to routes in case of any temporary traffic or road restrictions and if you have not cycled before or are returning to cycling after an absence Sustrans provides cycle safety advice on its website.

When walking, wheeling or cycling you should follow the Highway Code to keep everyone safe. In particular:

- only pedestrians - including people using wheelchairs and mobility scooters - should use the pavement.
- cyclists should only cycle on designated cycle lanes, shared paths and roads.
- on shared, non-segregated paths, all users should be considerate of each other. Cyclists should use a bell to warn of their presence but be mindful that a bell may not be sufficient warning to pedestrians with hearing, visual or mobility impairments.

When **walking or wheeling** you must maintain physical distancing and only walk or wheel alone or with members of your household.

You should wash or sanitise your hands before and after walking or wheeling in case you inadvertently touch any hard surfaces or other pedestrians or persons wheeling. We also recommend that you clean your wheelchair in case it is touched by another person when wheeling.

When **cycling** you should maintain physical distancing. You should wash or sanitise your hands before and after cycling. We also recommend that you wash your cycle in case it is touched by another person either whilst cycling or at the destination of your journey.

If you are unable to walk or cycle in full or in part on your journey the next sections provide advice on the use of private and public transport.

Bus, Rail, Glasgow Subway, Edinburgh Tram

Plan your journey

It is important that you plan your journey and check with [travelinescotland](https://www.travelinescotland.com) or your transport operator for the latest travel advice on your route. Your transport operator will also have information on the measures they have put in place to ensure your safety when travelling.

It is possible that travel may take longer than normal on some routes due to reduced capacity and physical distancing measures. You should therefore allow sufficient time especially if your journey involves changes between different forms of transport.

You are advised to plan ahead by identifying alternative routes and options in case of unexpected disruption.

If you can, you should travel at off-peak times which are likely to be less busy. If you are travelling to work your employer may agree alternative or flexible working hours to enable you to travel at less busy times.

Where possible, you should book your travel online through your transport provider's ticketing app, smartcard or website. If you are unable to pay for tickets online you should consider contactless payment, if you can, or have the correct cash available.

You should keep a 2 metre distance from people who are not in your household if you are walking to a station or bus stop and maintain a 2 metre distance on a platform or at a bus stop. Where this may not be possible you should keep the time you spend within 2 metres of others as short as possible and avoid physical contact.

We recommend before starting your journey you wash or sanitise your hands.

On your journey – staying safe

During the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak some routes may have less space available than usual due to physical distancing measures or changes to previous timetables or schedules.

You should try to keep 2 metres away from people. There may be situations where this is not possible, for example when boarding or alighting, on busier services, busier times of day and when walking through interchanges. If you come within 2 metres of others, you should avoid physical contact and keep the time you spend within 2 metres of others as short as possible.

If you are travelling with members of your household you should sit together as that will free up space for other passengers.

You should, and are expected to, wear a face covering when using public transport as a consideration to your fellow passengers and transport staff. The wearing of a face covering for very young children or those with particular health conditions is not appropriate. See further guidance on face-covering.

When travelling comply with any signage or instructions on public transport or from transport staff as the safety measures in place are for everyone's benefit. Signs and notices may include information about:

- which seats to use or how to queue
- any physical restrictions such as screens and barriers or floor markings
- requests to board through different doors or to move to less busy areas
- the reduced number of passengers allowed on vehicles because of physical distancing measures.

Be considerate to your fellow passengers and to transport staff:

- wait for passengers to get off first before you board
- do not congregate near entrances, exits, under canopies, at bus stops, on platforms or outside of stations
- be prepared to queue or take a different entrance or exit at stations
- respect other people's space while travelling
- be aware of the impact of restrictions on the needs of fellow passengers who may have impairments, disabilities or mobility issues
- do not eat or drink, unless necessary on a long journey
- remember to take all your belongings and not leave any rubbish on tables or seats or other public areas.

If you cannot safely keep your distance on board a bus, train or tram then please wait for the next service. The bus driver, train staff or tram staff may have to ask you to wait for the next service, even when it does not appear necessary, due to reduced capacity and physical distancing measures. Your understanding and patience if this occurs will be appreciated by staff and your fellow passengers.

When travelling be aware of the surfaces you touch. Be careful not to touch your face and remember to cover your mouth with a tissue or your elbow when coughing or sneezing.

Seek assistance if you need it

If you require assistance when travelling and would normally contact your transport operator ahead of time, continue to do so, so they can prepare accordingly.

If any problems arise or you feel ill during your journey, speak to a member of transport staff. In the case of an emergency, contact the emergency services as you normally would.

If you need help, maintain a 2 metre distance from members of staff. If this isn't possible, you should try to avoid physical contact, if possible, and keep the time you spend within 2 metres of staff as short as possible.

Children

Physical distancing applies to children as well as adults. Children should keep 2 metres from others who are not in their household. If this isn't possible they should avoid physical contact and keep the time spent within 2 metres of others as short as possible.

If you are the responsible adult or carer travelling with children, please try to ensure that children observe physical distancing.

Your schools and local authorities may have additional guidance in place for children on school transport which we recommend you follow. You should contact your local authority for information.

Completing your journey

When finishing your journey, you should deposit any of your used tissues or rubbish in bins. We recommend you wash or sanitise your hands (and children's hands if you are travelling with them) as soon as possible.

Travelling by Ferry

Plan your journey

It is important that you plan your journey and check with [travelinescotland](#) or your ferry operator or port for the latest travel advice on your route. There may be revised booking arrangements.

Ferry services vary significantly across Scotland from short crossings with small passenger-only vessels to long overnight crossings with cabins. Therefore, you should check with your ferry operator about the specific measures that they have put in place to ensure your safety when travelling.

If using connecting transport to the ferry you should allow sufficient time in case the connecting transport takes longer than normal due to reduced capacity and physical distancing measures.

Where possible, book your travel online through your transport provider's ticketing app, smartcard or website. If you are unable to pay for tickets online you should check whether contactless or cash payment will be available.

We recommend before starting your journey you wash or sanitise your hands.

On your journey – staying safe

During the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak some routes may be busier than usual due to physical distancing measures or changes to previous timetables or schedules.

You should try to keep 2 metres away from people at all times. There may be situations where this is not possible. If you come within 2 metres of others, you should avoid physical contact and keep the time you spend within 2 metres of others as short as possible.

You should follow the instructions on board the vessel on the wearing of face coverings. If you wear a face-covering you should be aware that the wearing of a face covering for very young children or those with particular health conditions is not appropriate. See further guidance on face-covering.

When travelling comply with any signage or instructions on the ferry or from staff as the safety measures in place are for everyone's benefit. Signs and notices may include information about:

- which seats to use or how to queue
- any physical restrictions such as screens, barriers or floor markings

- requests to move to less busy areas
- the reduced number of passengers allowed on vessels because of physical distancing measures.

Be considerate to your fellow passengers and to staff:

- follow instructions from vessel and port staff while boarding or disembarking
- do not congregate near entrances and exits,
- be prepared to queue
- respect other people's space while travelling
- be aware of the impact of restrictions on the needs of fellow passengers who may have impairments, disabilities or mobility issues
- remember to take all your belongings and not leave any rubbish on tables or seats or other public areas.

When travelling be aware of the surfaces you touch. Be careful not to touch your face and remember to cover your mouth with a tissue or your elbow when coughing or sneezing.

Seek assistance if you need it

If you require assistance when travelling and would normally contact your transport operator ahead of time, continue to do so, so they can prepare accordingly.

If any problems arise or you feel ill during your journey, speak to a member of staff. In the case of an emergency, contact a member of the staff.

If you need help, maintain a 2 metre distance from members of staff. If this isn't possible, you should try to avoid physical contact, if possible, and keep the time you spend within 2 metres of staff as short as possible.

Children

Physical distancing applies to children as well as adults. Children should keep 2 metres from others who are not in their household. If this isn't possible they should avoid physical contact and keep the time spent within 2 metres of others as short as possible.

If you are the responsible adult or carer travelling with children, please try to ensure that children observe physical distancing.

Completing your journey

When finishing your journey, you should deposit any of your used tissues or rubbish in bins. We recommend you wash or sanitise your hands (and children's hands if you are travelling with them) as soon as possible.

Taxis and Private Hire vehicles

Plan your journey

It is important that you plan your journey. Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle operators may have put in place new measures to help with physical distancing. You should check what new measures apply. You may wish to confirm payment arrangements to avoid, if possible, cash transactions.

We recommend before starting your journey you wash or sanitise your hands.

On your journey

At taxi ranks you should try to keep a 2 metre distance from others. If you come within 2 metres of others, you should avoid physical contact and keep the time you spend within 2 metres of others as short as possible.

You should wear a face covering when using a taxi or private hire vehicle as a consideration to your driver. The wearing of a face covering for very young children or those with particular conditions is not appropriate. See further guidance on face-covering.

You should also be aware of the surfaces, like door handles, you or others touch.

Be considerate to your driver by taking all your belongings and rubbish when leaving the vehicle.

Completing your journey

When finishing your journey, you should deposit any of your used tissues or rubbish in bins. We recommend you wash or sanitise your hands (and children's hands if you are travelling with them) as soon as possible.

Private cars and other vehicles

Plan your journey

It is important that you plan your journey and check the latest travel advice on your route via [trafficscotland](https://www.trafficscotland.gov.uk/).

Try to stay as local as possible to your home unless you are traveling for work purposes. Routes may be different as local authorities make changes to enable physical distancing on pavements and cycle routes.

On your journey

Good ventilation particularly by keeping the car windows open and facing away from fellow passengers may help to reduce the risk of transmission.

You should be aware of the surfaces within your vehicle that you or others touch. If the vehicle is your responsibility you should clean regularly areas such as the steering wheel and door handles.

When driving, you should anticipate more pedestrians and cyclists than usual, especially at peak times of day. You should allow other road users to maintain physical distancing by, for example, giving cyclists room for a 2 metre separation at traffic lights.

You should limit the time you spend at garages, petrol stations and motorway services. You should keep a 2 metre distance from others and pay by contactless methods, if possible.

You should wash or sanitise your hands before your journey and if you are the driver you should encourage passengers to do likewise.

Completing your journey

When finishing your journey, we recommend you wash or sanitise your hands as soon as possible and ensure that keys or fobs are also cleaned regularly.

Air travel

Separate guidance relating to airports and aviation is available from the airline you are travelling with or your travel agent. Please also check the websites of the airport you will be departing from, and the airport you will be arriving at.

International travel

If travelling abroad is essential, make sure you check the latest Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) advice before travelling. Check with your travel agent or your airline, ferry or train operator on specific rules for each route and destination.

Bear in mind that quarantine rules may apply in the country you are visiting and when you return to the UK.

Coronavirus (COVID-19): public use of face coverings

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Physical distancing rules mean that you should only leave the house for very limited purposes, for example:

- for basic necessities, such as food and medicine. Trips must be as infrequent as possible
- daily exercise, for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household. Exercise can take place outdoors as often as you like, as long as you observe physical distancing rules
- to ensure basic animal welfare needs are met, including taking dogs out when necessary
- any medical need, including to donate blood, avoid or escape risk of injury or harm, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person
- travelling for work purposes, but only where you cannot work from home

These measures must be followed by everyone.

Read more:

- Coronavirus (COVID-19): staying at home and away from others
- [Guidance on physical distancing](#) is available on NHS Inform. This also includes important guidance on hand washing and cough hygiene
- Separate advice is available on NHS Inform for [individuals or households who are isolating](#).

Use of face coverings

Questions have been asked about the use of facial coverings and we address that here.

Physical distancing, hand washing and respiratory hygiene, are the most important and effective measures we can all adopt to prevent the spread of coronavirus. Therefore the wearing of facial coverings must not be used as an alternative to any of these other precautions.

The evidence on the use of face coverings is limited, but there may be some benefit in wearing a facial covering when you leave the house and enter enclosed spaces, especially where physical distancing is more difficult and where there is a risk of close contact with multiple people you do not usually meet. Examples include, traveling on public transport or entering a food shop where it is not always possible to maintain a 2 metre distance from another customer. There is no evidence to suggest there might be a benefit outdoors, unless in an unavoidable crowded situation, where there may be some benefit.

As some people can have the virus but experience no symptoms (asymptomatic infection), wearing a face covering in the situations outlined above may provide some level of protection against transmission to other people in close proximity.

However, it remains the case that anyone with symptoms and all members of their household (whether they have symptoms or not), must self-isolate and adhere to the [guidance on individual and household isolation](#) on NHS Inform.

By face coverings we do not mean the wearing of a surgical or other medical grade mask but a facial covering of the mouth and nose, that is made of cloth or other textiles and through which you can breathe, for example a scarf.

When applying or removing the covering, it is important that you wash your hands first and avoid touching your face. After each use, you must wash the face covering at 60 degrees centigrade or dispose of safely. Face coverings should not be used for children under the age of two years.

We are recommending that you consider using face coverings in the limited circumstances described above as a precautionary measure. Given that the evidence of impact on transmission is relatively weak, the public use of facial coverings is not being made mandatory and will not be enforced at this stage. However, we will keep this guidance under ongoing review as we consider any easing of lockdown restrictions in the weeks ahead.